CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1589
11 August 1999

Original: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 10 AUGUST 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF REMARKS MADE BY PRESIDENT CLINTON ON 23 JULY, WHEN HE SIGNED THE "NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE ACT OF 1999"

Attached is the text of remarks made by President Clinton on 23 July, when he signed the "National Missile Defense Act of 1999".

I would be grateful if you would issue this text as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distribute it to all Member States and non-member participant States of the Conference.

(Signed) Robert T. Grey, Jr.
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the United States to the
Conference on Disarmament

GE.99-65417

The White House, Washington, D.C.
July 23, 1999

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I have signed into law H.R. 4, the "National Missile Defense Act of 1999." My Administration is committed to addressing the growing danger that rogue nations may develop and field long-range missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies.

Section 2 of this Act states that it is the policy of the United States to deploy as soon as technologically possible an effective National Missile Defense (NMD) system with funding subject to the annual authorization of appropriations and the annual appropriation of funds for NMD. By specifying that any NMD deployment must be subject to the authorization and appropriations process, the legislation makes clear that no decision on deployment has been made. This interpretation, which is confirmed by the legislative record taken as a whole, is also required to avoid any possible impairment of my constitutional authorities.

Section 3 of the Act states that it is the policy of the United States to seek continued negotiated reductions in Russian nuclear forces. Thus, section 3 puts the Congress on record as continuing to support negotiated reductions in strategic missile arms, reaffirming my Administration's position that our missile defense policy must take into account our arms control and nuclear nonproliferation objectives.

Next year, we will, for the first time, determine whether to deploy a limited National Missile Defense, when we review the results of flight tests and other developmental efforts, consider cost estimates, and evaluate the threat. Any NMD system we deploy must be operationally effective, cost-effective, and enhance our security. In making our determination, we will also review progress in achieving our arms control objectives, including negotiating any amendments to the ABM Treaty that may be required to accommodate a possible NMD deployment.